



OCTOBER—DECEMBER 2006

Families Helping Families' mission is to provide information and referral, education and training and peer to peer support to individuals with disabilities and their families.

**NFHF Board**

**Chairperson:**

James Klick, J.D.

**Secretary:**

Carol Torrey, Ph.D.

**Treasurer:**

Leo Hemelt, J.D.

**Board Members:**

Barry Kyle, CPA

Paulette Barney

Peggy Wales

**Advisory Board:**

Mary Ann Haase

You are always welcome at NFHF Board Meetings. Our Board meetings are held the third Thursday every other month at 7:00 pm at our Resource Center. If you would like to address the Board, call Jeanne Abbott-Gauthier at (985) 875-0511.

NFHF Disability  
Resource Center

985-875-0511

Toll-Free

1-800-383-8700

[www.fhfnorthshore.org](http://www.fhfnorthshore.org)

## POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

NORTHSHORE FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES  
**Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities  
Resource Center on Psychiatric & Behavioral Supports**

**Speaker:**

Rebecca Mandal, Ph.D., Resource Center Director

**Workshop:**

This training delves into the behavioral patterns and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and how this disorder is identified, specifically in people with developmental disabilities. The topics that will be covered are:

- \* How to recognize traumatic events
- \* Defining PTSD
- \* The criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD
- \* PTSD behaviors and/or symptoms present specifically in people with developmental disabilities
- \* Intervention strategies for people with developmental disabilities and PTSD

The material covered in this workshop will allow participants to gain a clear understanding of what PTSD is, and is not, in order to better serve and support people with developmental disabilities that may have experienced trauma.

**Date/Time:**

December 8, 2006  
9:30 am – 3:00 pm

**Location:**

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum  
133 Mabel Drive  
Madisonville, LA

**Registration Information:**

Please call 985-875-0511 or 1-800-383-8700 by December 5th to RSVP or you may email us at [NFHF@bellsouth.net](mailto:NFHF@bellsouth.net).

LUNCH PROVIDED

Funded by FLORIDA PARISHES HUMAN SERVICES AUTHORITY



# Inclusive Christmas Celebration

We would like to invite all friends and family of NFHF for a holiday potluck celebration.

Bring a dish and join our staff for a time of celebration and fine food (NFHF will provide turkey).

Saturday, December 16, 2006  
11:00 am—2:00 pm

Covington Presbyterian Church  
Fellowship Hall  
222 South Jefferson Street  
Covington, LA

Must RSVP by November 27th



# SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST

In order to preserve the public assistance benefits of a person with a disability, such as a child with a developmental disability, etc., many people use a special needs trust.

The Medicaid program, which pays medical expenses for those who have a low income and few resources, has limits on the amount of assets that a recipient can own or can earn during each year that welfare benefits are paid.

In order to qualify for the program prior to spending down one's estate, some individuals attempt to give their assets to relatives or invest them into an exempt form, such as a personal residence in which the spouse resides. Single persons sometimes transfer their residence to their children and retain the right to live in the house for the remainder of their lifetime.

The law denies persons eligibility for Medicaid benefits if assets were transferred less than 36 months before the application for benefits. This is a complicated and changing area of the law.

## Trusts for Children with Disabilities

A parent of a child with a disability should review each asset to see whether or not it will pass to that child at time of a parent's death. For example, life insurance, annuities, IRAs, pension benefits, joint bank accounts, etc., often pass to persons other than those named in one's will or trust. If such assets pass to a disabled child, however, he or she may lose current government benefits.

One must also decide whether or not to disinherit a child with a disability or use a special-needs type of trust.

Special needs trusts are generally established by the parents or other relatives of the disabled child. The trustee should have absolute discretion over how to expend the trust funds for the benefit of the disabled child.

- **Government benefits**— Government benefits should be used to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- **Special needs trust**— The funds from the trust should be used for supplementary needs such as utilities, medical care, special equipment, education, job training or entertainment.

## Seek Professional Guidance

### NFHF NEEDS BOARD MEMBERS

Northshore Families Helping Families is currently recruiting professionals and family members that are interested in becoming Board Members.

If you have the passion to help an agency grow, enjoy doing fundraising, have an expertise in law, insurance, accounting, banking, public relations, information and technology or long term planning, please consider this opportunity.

To learn more about NFHF and Board Membership, please email Jeanne Abbott-Gauthier at:

JAbbottnfhf@aol.com.

**DID YOU KNOW** that the DD Council provides Northshore Families Helping Families stipend money to assist individuals with disabilities or their family members to go to a conference?

If there is a conference or training you'd like to attend and need financial assistance, please give us a call.

To request a stipend, call NFHF at 985-875-0511.

### You Are Not Alone

At Northshore Families Helping Families, you can connect with other families in the "Families Can't Wait Program" who share your concerns and who are learning to see the bright side of disability issues. If you are interested in connecting with another family, please call (800)383-8700 or (985)875-0511.

E-mail: [nfhf@bellsouth.net](mailto:nfhf@bellsouth.net)

# Inclusive Families Can't Wait Picnic

## Special Thanks

to  
Mr. Maurice LeBlanc  
Yogi Bear  
Jellystone Park  
Robert, La  
for all the assistance provided to Northshore Families Helping Families to make the fall picnic a success.



### Submitted by a Thankful Mom

My name is Summer Mizell. My son Dillon is a student at Lewis Vincent Elementary in Livingston Parish. We transferred Dillon back to Lewis Vincent after a bad experience during placement in another school.

The first day back at Lewis Vincent we were greeted by friendly and familiar faces. We walked into the classroom to meet his new teacher, **Ms. Lauren McGowan**, and after only a few minutes of speaking with her I knew that she would be Dillon's champion.

**Ms. McGowan** is what I like to call an "unconventional" teacher. Her classroom focused on working in centers and many hands on activities. She sent Dillon encouraging notes in his homework folder each night that always brought a smile to his face. Dillon's grades rose rapidly, and each day he was excited to go to school.

I would like to say, "**THANK YOU,**" to **Ms. McGowan** for all that you do. You are truly a champion for children, and I appreciate all of your work!

Northshore Families Helping Families  
would like to recognize our Advisory Board Member:

### Mary Ann Haase

for her endless hours of work and dedication in making the Kids Konnection Playground happen. We also acknowledge and thank everyone else who was involved. Our children will enjoy many hours of inclusive recreation due to the generosity of sponsors and the hard work of parents, professionals and family members.

Kids Konnection playground is located on Koop Drive at the Tammany Trace. The grand opening of the playground will take place on **Friday, December 1, 2006**. Please come by and visit Southeast Louisiana's first Boundless Playground. The playground is for children and adults of all abilities.

**Let the playing begin.**

### *COMMUNITY EVENT*

December 10, 2006—Special Angels Mass—Inclusive Mass for children and individuals with disabilities and their families. Our Lady of the Lake, 312 Lafitte St., Mandeville, LA 7:30 pm. Any questions? Please call Michelle at 985-626-4119.

## COMING IN JANUARY

### TRISOMY SPECIAL PARENT'S GROUP

Please call NFHF if you are interested in becoming a part of this dynamic and much needed group.

## WANTED

Veteran and New Parents of ALL children who have Trisomy.

Trisomy is a chromosomal anomaly that is characterized by the presence of an extra chromosome in the cells of a person's body.

Welcome  
New Staff Members

Liz Gary  
Carmen O'Mara  
Erin Delafosse

Northshore Families Helping Families

204 W 21st Avnue  
Covington,La 70433  
Phone: 985-875-0511  
1-800-383-8700  
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Non Profit Rate  
U.S.Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit 26  
Mandeville, LA

{ [www.fhfnorthshore.org](http://www.fhfnorthshore.org) }

NFHF STAFF

JEANNE ABBOTT-GAUTHIER  
Exceutive Director

ERIN DELAFOSSE  
Families Can't Wait Coordinator

CHARLES BILELLO  
Referral Specialist  
Transition Facilitator

LIZ GARY  
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IEP Facilitator  
Transition Coordinator

STEPHANIE MILLER  
Children's Special Health  
Services Parent Liason

CARMEN O'MARA  
Data Entry  
Referral Specialist

HILLERY KINCHEN  
IEP Facilitator

***Northshore Families Helping Families Happenings***

**Please call 985-875-0511 or 1-800-383-8700 to RSVP for all workshops or email us at [nfhf@bellsouth.net](mailto:nfhf@bellsouth.net).**

November 15, 2006—Craig Blackburn - Outstanding young Self -Advocate with Down syndrome will present "I CAN" —Hammond Health Unit—11:00 am

November 16, 2006—Social Security Benefits—Hammond Health Unit—1:00-3:00 pm

November 21, 2006—Autism Network Group Meeting—LA Heart Hospital—7:00 pm—Andrea Fleming, an Applied Behavior Analysis Specialist will be the guest speaker.

December 7, 2006—Self-Determination and the Self Advocacy Movement—Covington Presbyterian Church—Call for time.

December 8, 2006—Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—This training delves into the behavioral patterns and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and how this disorder is identified specifically in people with developmental disabilities.—Lake Pontchartrain Maritime Musuem—133 Mabel Drive, Madisonville —9:30 am—3:00 pm

December 12, 2006—Navigating the World of Special Education/ Writing an Effective IEP—The workshop will focus on writing IEP's based on IDEA law. St. Tammany Parish Covington Library —10:00 am—Noon

December 13, 2006—Navigating the World of Special Education/ Writing an Effective IEP—The workshop will focus on writing IEP's based on IDEA law. Mike's Catfish Inn, 1009 W. Oak Street, Amite, LA —10:00 am—Noon

December 16, 2006—INCLUSIVE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION—SEE PAGE 2.

January 11, 2007—Leadership Training for Self -Advocates—Place and time TBA.